

Message Text

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TAGS: OTRA, MILI, LU

SUBJ: NATO/SHAPE/USEC VISIT

REF: LUXEMBOURG 357 AND 371

1. A GROUP OF SEVEN LUXEMBOURG JUNIOR MINISTRY OFFICIALS, JOURNALISTS, AND POLITICAL YOUTH GROUP LEADERS, ACCOMPANIED BY ECONOFFICER JOHN RILEY, VISITED NATO HQS. FOR A FULL DAY OF BRIEFINGS ON APRIL 8, AND THE US MISSION TO THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES AND SHAPE FOR A MORNING AND AFTERNOON SESSION RESPECTIVELY ON APRIL 9.

2. THE EMBASSY FINDS SUCH VISITS IMPORTANT FOR OPINION-LEADERS IN LUXEMBOURG. THE GRAND DUCHY'S CONTRIBUTION TO ANY INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION MUST NECESSARILY BE RELATIVELY MODEST GIVEN ITS SIZE. NONETHELESS, WITH ITS HIGH PER CAPITA INCOME, LUXEMBOURG'S SHARE IS NOT INSIGNIFICANT AND SYMBOLICALLY QUITE IMPORTANT IN NATO. AS IT IS, LUXEMBOURG MAKES THE LOWEST PERCENTAGE CONTRIBUTION TO NATO, A SITUATION WHICH HOPEFULLY WILL BE CORRECTED. FURTHER EROSION OF SUPPORT SHOULD BE ACTIVELY RESISTED AND PUBLIC RELATIONS

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EFFORTS SUCH AS THIS VISIT ARE A DISTINCT ASSET.

3. LUXEMBOURG HAS NOT HAD COMPULSORY MILITARY SERVICE SINCE 1967. ITS "DEFENSE FORCES" ARE NOW LIMITED TO A 700-MAN MILITARY SERVICE UNDER A "FORCE PUBLIQUE" MINISTRY. UNDERSTANDABLY, PERHAPS, MILITARY MATTERS RECEIVE LITTLE ATTENTION IN LUXEMBOURG AND PUBLIC AWARENESS OF THE NEED FOR NATO, OR A LOCAL PARTICIPATION IN THE ALLIANCE, IS LOW. THE GENERATION WHICH EXPERIENCED WW II, THE OCCUPATION AND THE LIBERATION RELIGIOUSLY COMMEMORATES THESE EVENTS. IT IS PERHAPS EASY FOR THE YOUNGER GENERATIONS TO VIEW THE MILITARY AS PART OF THE PAST EACH TIME YET ANOTHER WREATH IS LAID. THE PRESENT SECURITY SITUATION CERTAINLY DOES NOT LOOM LARGE IN THEIR THINKING. THE FIRST - AND RECURRING - QUESTIONS ASKED BY PARTICIPANTS WERE "WHY DOESN'T NATO MAKE A GREATER EFFORT TO INFORM THE PUBLIC OF ITS PURPOSE AND CAPABILITIES? HOW CAN NATO EXPECT COMFORTABLE CITIZENS TO APPRECIATE THE VITAL IMPORTANCE OF A STRONG DEFENSIVE ALLIANCE?".

4. THE VISITS PROGRAM CERTAINLY PROVIDED AN IMPORTANT MENANS OF ANSWERING THESE QUESTIONS, ALBEIT FOR A SELECT FEW. THE FULLY-DAY PROGRAM AT NATO WAS WELL ORGANIZED AND PRESENTED A TRULY INTERNATIONAL VIEW OF SEVERAL FACETS OF THE ORGANIZATION. DESPITE LUXEMBOURGERS' LINGUISTIC SKILLS, THE AVAILABILITY OF LUXEMBOURG AMBASSADOR FISCHBACH AND SENIOR BRIEFING OFFICER FERNAND WELTER FOR A TOUR D'HORIZON IN LUXEMBOURGISH WAS HIGHLY APPRECIATED. MR. WELTER IS CLEARLY AN EXPERIENCED AND ABLE BRIEFER AND HE GAVE A STRONG START TO THE DAY. THE PRESENTATION ON CCMS BY JAMES SAMPAS SHOWED HOW AN EFFECTIVE ALLIANCE MECHANISM CAN STIMULATE PROGRESS IN NON-MILITARY AREAS TO THE BENEFIT OF ALL MEMBER NATIONS. MR. O. CARACCIOLA DI FORINO, PLANS AND POLICY SECTION HEAD, DISPLAYED A MASTERFUL GRASP OF THE POLICY ISSUES CONFRONTING THE WESTERN DEMOCRACIES AND COVERED THIS BROAD SPECTRUM IN AN ADMIRABLY RELAXED, PROFESSIONAL MANNER.

5. THE OPPORTUNITY TO MEET OTHER LUXEMBOURG OFFICIALS AND TALK WITH SPEAKERS INFORMALLY OVER LUNCH WAS A THOUGHTFUL GESTURE AND CONTRIBUTED FURTHER TO A UNCLASSIFIED

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DESIRABLY AT HOME ATMOSPHERE.

6. THE AFTERNOON INCLUDED A WELL BALANCED CIVILIAN/MILITARY DISCUSSION WITH PIERRE SHOSTAL AND COL. GARY PHILLIPS OF THE US MISSION TO NATO WHICH MADE CLEAR THE US COMMITMENT TO NATO AND OUR VIEWS ON THE CAPABILITIES AND DIRECTION OF THE ALLIANCE.

7. THE USEC VISIT PROVIDED AN EXCELLENT, CANDID OVERVIEW OF US-COMMON MARKET ISSUES. PERHAPS MOST IMPORTANT, IT DEMONSTRATED THE ECONOMIC INTERDEPENDENCE OF THE TWO TRADING BLOCS. THE NEAR COINCIDENCE OF EC AND NATO MEMBERSHIP WAS NOT LOST ON THE AUDIENCE. ERNEST JOHNSTON AND ARTHUR HOFFMAN'S APPROACHES WERE DIRECT AND FORTHRIGHT AND WERE FAVORABLY COMMENTED ON BY THE GROUP.

8. A STOP AT SHAPE IS AN IMPORTANT ADJUNCT TO A NATO VISIT BUT IN OUR VIEW SHOULD PRECEED AND NOT FOLLOW THE NATO PROGRAM. SHAPE PRESENTS THE MILITARY FACE, UNDERSCORES THE NATURE OF THE THREAT AND THEREBY THE NEED FOR AN ALLIANCE. HAVING OFFERED STRONG FARE, THE SHAPE PRESENTATIONS PROVOKE CONSIDERABLE REACTION AND THOUGHT. WE SUGGEST THAT THIS INTEREST WOULD BE BETTER CHanneLED TOWARD NATO SPOKESMEN WHO ARE IN A BETTER, I.E. MORE APPROPRIATE, POSITION TO MAKE POLICY STATEMENTS. IT WOULD ALSO ENABLE VISITORS TO TAKE BETTER ADVANTAGE OF ACCESS TO NATO OFFICIALS AFTER THEY ARE MORE FAMILIAR WITH THE FACTS AND FIGURES AND CAN THEN TURN TO ISSUES AND ANSWERS.

9. THE ONLY ADVERSE COMMENT ON THE OVERALL PROGRAM WAS THAT THE FORMAL SHAPE PRESENTATION HAD A SOMEWHAT SCARE-TACTIC APPROACH, WHICH DID NOT ADEQUATELY BALANCE THE STRENGTH OF "US" VERSUS THE DANGER POSED BY "THEM". IT ALSO SUGGESTED TO SOME AN ALL-PURPOSE SLIDE SHOW LESS SUITABLE FOR SOPHISTICATED AUDIENCES. NONETHELESS, MAJOR YVON THIBAUT ABLY COVERED HIS MILITARY TERRAIN. THE ADDED PARTICIPATION OF COL. LLOYD MORRIS IN THE DISCUSSION SESSION BROUGHT BALANCE AND BREADTH TO THE PRESENTATION.

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10. THE EMBASSY THANKS HAROLD RADDAY, INFORMATION OFFICER, USNATO, FOR HIS EXCELLENT ORGANIZATION AND WELCOME.
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